

NOW and EVER;

S H E W I N G,

Where the Work of Conversion is
thoroughly done, it is done for ever.

E s A. 46. 3, 4.

*Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant
of the house of Israel, which are born by me from the
belly, which are carryed from the womb. And even to
your old age I am he, and even to hoar haires will I car-
ry you: I have made, and I will bear, even I will carry
and will deliver you.*

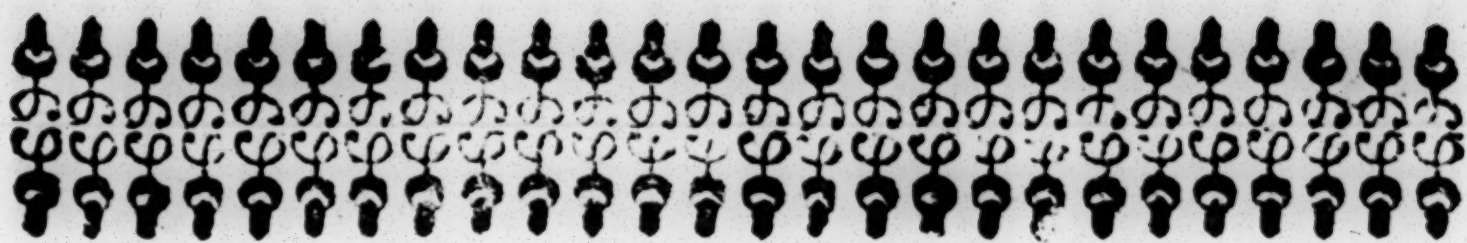
P s A L. 48. 14.

*This God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide
even unto death.*

By *William Femmat*, Preacher of the
Gospel in Reading.

L O N D O N

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To the Serious Reader.

THere be two weighty truths about the grace of Conversion in a soul that shall be saved: One, that of necessity it must be done in this present life, according to that of Salomon, Eccl. 9. 10. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest. *Now or Never.* The other, that when this work is once done well, in some good manner as it ought to be done, it is done for ever, and shall never fail the Christian here or hereafter. The former is a matter of serious diligence and carefulness: The latter, of strong and full consolation. Happy is the soul that suffers it self to be perswaded and over-ruled in present, to do this great business of coming home to his God, and joyning it self to him in a perpetual Covenant that shall never be forgotten. Hereby it hath done a work which shall last to Eternity, and never be undone any more. *Now and Ever.* And it is such a work, as shall stand it in stead whatever sad occasions shall meet it in this evil and troublesome world. Believers amidst all bodily infirmities, and temptations, and afflictions of this life, yet in their God to whom through rich mercy they are come at conversion, have a sure and strong stay to rest upon, and may say as David, Psal. 73. 26. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. O precious portion for a soul to find settling and contentment! A portion is that which falls to a man upon division of Land or Goods. Now the Lord in his most wise dispensation allots to some a portion in temporals: They have their portion in this life, Psal. 17. 14. To others he reserves himself for a portion, who is infinitely better then the multitude of Riches, Pleasures, Honours, and all the finest accommodations. And because God is the portion of Believers, therefore it is the good part, or portion, Luke 10. 42. It is a blisfull portion, and makes those for ever happy who share in it, Psal.

To the Reader, &c.

144.15. It is an all-sufficient portion, and in every respect able to serve our turns, and give complete contentment, Gen. 17. 1. And it is an everlasting portion: my portion for ever, saith David. And the Lord becomes the portion of a believing soul, partly by his own free and voluntary giving himself to it, both in his eternal Decree and purpose, as also by actual application; partly by the souls voluntary accepting, owning, and choosing the Lord for a portion, with which it will rest satisfied, Lam. 3. 24. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul. The Lord himself perswade, strengthen, and establish our hearts by believing, that we may rest contented with this our portion, and be in some measure thankful for it: that seeing he hath vouchsafed to be our portion, we may ever think it fitting and necessary to be a peculiar people and portion unto him, Deut. 32. 9. The Lords portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his Inheritance.

W. J.

Now

Now and Ever.

ISAIAH 40. 30, 31.

Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall.

But they that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as Eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

IN the beginning of this Chapter the Lord by his Prophet had promised great and glorious things to his poor Church, as return out of the Babylonish Captivity, with wonderful mercies procuring and accompanying the same, and such as reach to the times of the Gospel, *ver. 3.* Chr It comes to do it, and the Baptist makes way for him; therefore Believers may expect performance: Which that they may do, the Prophet doth lively set forth the Power and Wisdom of God, which are the main helps to accomplish his Decrees: he knows how to do it, and he is able to do it: and a Believer may easily collect, that if the Lord be so powerful and careful in the Government of the world, how much more will he so be for the good of his Church and Chosen?

Then it might be objected, Yea but the Church seems to be of all other most neglected, and is most troubled in the world; and this makes us even faint, and cast hope away, *ver. 27.* For this they are blamed in the Verses following, and told, that God is sufficient for his Church against all her enemies, and in all her faintness; and they shall see Great Ones of the world fail and come to nothing, when his people shall survive and be triumphant.

This last is the mind of the Holy Ghost in these two last Verses, which have an amplification of the Churches strength

By opposition to the strength of nature, and of the world : *Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall : but they that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength ; they shall mount up with wings as Eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint :* As if he had said, None have the strength that Gods people have, no not the stoutest and choicest men that are, whom Generals and Commanders of War do pick out from the rest, and most trust in, and brag of their puissance ; yet faintness comes upon such by Hunger, Cold, Watching, Travelling, Fighting, rumors that they hear of the enemies might, fear which the Lord sends upon their spirits a thousand wayes to cool their courage. But my people go upon better and higher Principles, namely of my favour, and of my special grace in them, whereby through believing they shall become strong out of weakness, and hold out to a full and glorious victory over all enemies, both from hell and in the world.

Now this opposition of strength and strength leads us to these two Propositions : One, That all created strength is of a fainting and failing nature. The other, That the strength whereby true Christians stand in the favour of God, and the expectation of heaven, is greater and better then all the strength of nature, even taken at the best and strongest.

Briefly of the former : All created strength is of a fainting and failing nature. Though there be not only a firm and healthy body, but much courage of mind, with assistance of Arts and Parts, and alliance of Friends, and all encouragements that are to be had, yet in the Event all prevails not to attain the desired end. *Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill, Eccl. 9. 11.* It is true, by those accomplishments nature may attain to live long in the world, to rise high in the world, to get a great Estate, to have great Victories over enemies, with other great matters which Weaklings may not once think to attain. But beside the sad disappointments which these sometimes meet withall, even amidst all their bravery they commit foul Error,

errours, they shorten their dayes by Intemperance, they fall into Consumptions, or at best, the longer they live, the nearer they draw to their end : and it is seen ordinarily, that the Bell rings out, and the Grave opens for young ones as well as for the old ; few now-a-days come to the Age set in *Moses* time, of threescore and ten, or fourscore.

The reason is, by the fall sin hath disabled our nature, both in powers of the body and mind, and so ministers occasion to the great God of heaven to cut us short of our hope and possibilities : *Our sins withhold good things from us, Jer. 5. 25.* And, the Lord will have the finest Naturalists see, that not by might or power, but by his Spirit great things are to be accomplished : *He takes the wise in their craftiness, he turns their counsel into foolishness; he shews strength with his arm, he scatters the proud in the imagination of their hearts; he puts down the mighty from their seats, and exalteth men of low degree; he filleth the hungry with good things, and the rich he sends empty away.*

Application make thus.

1. See what a poor happiness the happiness of worldlings is. When they are at their height, and in the best estate they can be in here below, or desire to be in (with a real and regular desire) so that their Neighbours take them to be happy creatures, and they think no less of themselves, yet indeed they fall much short of the true happiness ; and godly men shall not change Estates with them, though poor and miserable as to the world. Why? because the best and most complete attainments they have, are but fading Commodities : the one stroke of Death cuts the thred of their whole happiness; there comes a Fever or other mischievous Disease, and so an end of the man and all his braveries : So that neither himself hath cause to vaunt, or please himself in his fine condition, nor others to envy his prosperity while it holds most together. It is but as the green Bay-tree, flourishing in present, but soon blasted or cut down, and the place of it shall know it no more.

2. Let godly Christians bless the Lord, who hath laid their happiness in things of another nature and endurance ; namely spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus : that

though they be poor, or weak, or otherwise low in the world, yet in the best matters, through rich mercy, they are highly exalted; none so happy as they, indeed none but they. Therefore, not only be contented with your short pittance, but thankful that your lines are fallen unto you in pleasant places, and ye have a goodly heritage, *Psal. 16. 6.* Had your lot fallen otherwise to you, you had been of all men most miserable. Think of *Dives* tormented in those flames, and of the rich Churl whose soul in a night was taken from him, and so an end of all his plenty and jollity. Think how *David* blessed himself from faring as worldly-minded men shall fare: *Let me not eat of their dainties, Psal. 141. 4.* and again, *Deliver my soul from the wicked, from men which are thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world who have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their Babes.* Then refer all to the happiness that shall be revealed at the last day, as the Prophet there concludes, *As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness, Psal. 17. 14, 15, 16, 17.*

3. If all present comforts be so weak and fickle, *Let not the strong man glory in his strength, nor the rich man in his riches, nor the wise man in his wisdom, Jer. 9. 23.* Fine accommodations these are, and conduce much to make ones life comfortable; and he that is a wise Master of them, may do much good in his place and Generation, and greatly further his accounts in the day of accounting with God: But alas! they are but moth-eaten and poor comforts in themselves, very like to *Jonahs* Gourd which came up in a night, and perished in a night. When we think we have them safest, and take most pleasure in them, they dye in our hands as flowers which we gathered erewhile, and we our selves pass away with them, we know not how soon: And the wise *Salomon* hath said, *Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings: they fly away as an Eagle toward heaven, Prov. 23. 5.* and *Paul* said by the wisdom given unto him, *Rejoyce as not rejoycing, and in all your enjoyments be as if ye had them not, 1 Cor. 7. 30.* Remember, Christians, and not over-joy in a lusty Child,

a settled estate of health, tallness, comeliness, or properness of the body, the increase of a wealthy estate, a great inheritance either by descent or purchase. There is death in the pot; a secret worm lies at the root, and bites shrewdly: and all the joy may quickly be mar'd: and then, the more joy was, the greater will be the grief at parting, and shame for the former boasting, to see things turned to the quite contrary.

4. If natural comforts be turned upon such a wheel, then trust not in an arm flesh: *Put not your trust in Princes, nor in the son of man in whom there is no help: His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in that day all his thoughts perish*, Psal. 146. 3, 4. Nor may Princes trust in mighty and puissant armies, horses, warlike provisions, multitude of an hoste, or the best counsel they can take; all these have failed some that relied on them, and may fail others who rest on them as able to save. Nor may we rest upon potent friends, who are able to do much themselves, and use their interest in others for raising a party. Nor upon health and strength of body, nimbleness, or other natural perfections. Nor upon a strong wit, a deep reach, a firm and retentive memory, eloquence in discoursing, fitness of expressions, with other gifts of the mind: All compared to a staff of reed, whereon if a man lean, he may get a fall, it may be perish by the splinters running into his hand. Certainly this trusting in creatures, hinders faith in the Creator, and brings a curse in stead of a blessing, *Jer. 17. 5. Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord; and ver. 7. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.* Take heed, Christians, and beware of the evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God, *Heb. 3. 12.* which in this our corrupt nature these Puppets are apt to do.

5. This bricoleness of nature and natural things yieldeth sundry good instructions to young people, and to the Parents.

Parents briefly are admonished in three things. First, not to pride themselves in lusty and likely Children, as too many use to do, making them so many idols, and promising themselves great comfort by them; it may be, insulting over other men whose Children are weak and sickly; wherewith the Lord

is offended; and sometime the likely Children are taken away, or prove crosses, when ~~the~~ weaklings survive, and become comforts to their parents. Secondly parents even from the beginning should commend their children to the Lord by hearty prayer, that if they dye in the birth, or in their youth, yet by Jesus Christ it may be well with their poor souls to eternity. *Oh that Ismael might live in thy sight!* Thirdly, they should begin with them betimes, that by their gracious instructions they may quickly come to know and fear the Lord their God, and so, whatever becomes of them in the world, yet their poor souls may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ: the highest acts of charity that can be shewed to our children.

Next for young people;

1. They learn to walk in all humbleness of mind, as those that may be soon snatched away, and while they continue here, are subject to many faintings and failings. It concerns all to be cloathed with humility, but especially young people whose judgment is not yet settled, and they want the experience which in time they may have, neither are they acquainted with themselves and their manifold weaknesses as in time they may be, so that it is neither safe nor seemly for such to be shewing their opinion in matters, to be talking much in company of Elder people, especially to take upon them (without a Calling) to teach others, as some bold men in these days have dangerously adventured. Consider and fear: if ye have the grace of God in you of a truth, yet ye ought to *walk in humility*, so to be *worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called*, Eph. 4. 12. Much more, if the work of grace be not yet begun, or not well evidenced: here come those rules to be observed, Prov. 3. 5, 6, 7. *Learn not to thine own understanding, be not wise in thine own eyes, fear the Lord and depart from evil!*

2. Beware of loose and Libertine courses, which most young people do chuse, and delight to take, as best agreeing with their wild and foolish humors: therefore called the lusts of youth, and must be carefully avoided, 2 Tim. 2. 22. *Fly youthful lusts*: As fleshly lusts, and worldly lusts, and lusts of the mind, so the lusts of youth, which are either peculiar to young people, or most affected. Remember, and consider how these
lusts

lusts are apt to forestall all good instructions of the word, that there is no room for them; *whether they cannot enter, or if they do, they are soon thrust out again, Mark 4.19. The lusts of other things entering choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.* When our young people are nipt in the bud, they are scarce good ever afterward. Our loose times have shewed it abundantly. And after such lawlessness of young people comes that fearful summons, *Ecccl. 11.9. Rejoyce O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thy eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee unto judgment.*

3. Seeing all within you and without you is so fading and uncertain, lift up your eyes and hearts to the Creator, to get in with him, and by him to obtain a solid and lasting good, which may be sufficient for you in all other faintings and failings. *Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, and (which is the whole duty of man) fear God and keep his Commandments, Ecccl. 12.1, 13.* The wise man there had reckoned up all the vanities of the world, and prescribed remedies against them; and then bids us *hear the conclusion of the whole matter,* in those two precepts. When the soul is tyred out with the consideration of earthly vanities and distractive occurrences, it should bethink it self of getting home to his Ark, where it may find rest for the soles of his feet, as *Psal. 116.7. Return unto thy rest, O my soul: for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.* It should be good instruction both to young and old, when they find themselves perplexed or pricked with thorns of the world (as who of us doth not?) to return to our God, from whom by sin we departed. Never till then shall we find rest and assured confidence, *Hos. 2. 6, 7.* When the Lord beaded up the Churches way with thorns, that she could not find her path, then she said, *I will go and return to my first husband, for then was it better with me, then now.* And if young people in their young days would bethink themselves of returning to the Lord their God, they might save themselves many scratches and woundings which afterward they are put to endure.

4. Seeing all these things are so, ye should all receive the exhortation which we give so often, *Make sure of Christ,*
Make

Make sure of Christ; in him alone ye can find rest for your souls, there is no salvation in any other, no Name else given under heaven by which ye can be saved; not Saints and Angels, nor any of the creatures, nor all of them put together; all together could not redeem one soul, nor make up the peace with the great God. But in and by Christ all is firm and stable; everlasting love, everlasting compassions, everlasting arms to embrace the Penitent; an everlasting covenant, promises most certain, and sure to be performed, *Yea and Amen*, 2 Cor. 1. 20. Bear us witness, Christians, we invite you day by day to come and receive Christ for your own; we urge you with many Motives; we tell you of your sin and danger; and in the mean time ye feel in your selves the decays of nature, and see in the mortality of your Neighbours, what your case must be, and ye know not how soon. Once at last therefore be wise, and *Kiss the Son of God*, that in the worst straights ye may find enlargement, and be blessed, *Psal. 2. 12. Blessed are they that trust in him*. If ye were commanded to do some great thing for blessedness, would ye not do it? how much more when he saith, *Believe and ye shall be saved*; and, *He that believeth in him, shall not be confounded*?

To the other Proposition;

The strength whereby true Christians stand in the favor of God, and the expectation of heaven, is greater and better then all the strength of nature, even taken at the best and strongest. When the likeliest faint and are weary, yet they shall renew their strength, mount up with wings, run and not be weary, walk and not faint: Where we have, both a plain affirmation, of renewing their strength, and a borrowed speech, of Eagles who cast their Bill when they be old, and so get to be lively again; when their crooked Bill is put away, they take in their meat as before, and grow as strong as ever. All noting the perpetuity of the estate of grace, wherein when the Elect fail at any time, through mercy they recover all, and hold out to the end of their course; *They are strong in the Lord, and the power of his might*. On him they wait in the use of means, and of him they receive strength anew to be constant. *He strengtheneth they with strength in their souls*, *Psa. 138. 3*. Amidst many occasions

of fainting, their inward man is renewed day by day, 2 Cor. 4. 16. They call in fresh supplies by prayer, and so are strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man, Eph. 3. 16. And the prayer of other Believers sends in those fresh supplies, Col. 1. 11. *That ye may be strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.*

Certain it is, that the Lord hath undertaken to be the strength of his people: *The rock of their salvation, the strength of their salvation, the horn of salvation* which he raised up in the house of his servant David; and as much as the Creator is mighty above the creatures, so is a godly man above himself and all his natural abilities. In and of God he receives such puissant vertue, and so may grow confident, *Esa. 26. 4. Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehova is everlasting strength.*

In special, Christ himself is the strength of his chosen ones. He gives them his flesh which is meat indeed, and his blood which is drink indeed. He makes then a banquet at his own cost, and with his own merits, to feed them unto eternal life: that though the old *Israelites* in the wilderness did eat Manna and dye after it, yet so shall not they.

And as his merit is so efficacious, so his Spirit abides with them for ever; guides, leads into all truth, brings all things to their remembrance, and establisheth their hearts in this their gracious, and blessed estate. There is a vertue in his death, that they can dye no more in their sins: and a vertue in his resurrection, which makes them living members of his body, and living branches of the true Vine, to draw sap and juice from him, and be still pruned that they may bear more fruit.

Further proofs of this unvanquishable strength of Believers.

One Scripture saith of the godly, *The righteous is an everlasting foundation, Prov. 10. 25.* He in Scripture is called *righteous*, who is justified and sanctified: and he is called a *foundation*, to note his firm and stable condition; and, as a foundation, he bears up the pillars of the earth, both Church and State.

Another Scripture saith, God who hath begun a good work

in his people, will finish or perform it untill the day of Jesus Christ, *Phil. 1. 6.* When the work of conversion unto God is once well done, it is done for ever; it is (as he said of his History) *αἰώνιος αἰς αἰών* an everlasting possession: for God who is the Alpha, is also the Omega.

Another Scripture saith, Christ having loved his own which were in the world, *did love them unto the end, John 13. 1* and he saith himself, chap. 10. 28. *I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand; no nor Devil; but in him that loved them, they are more then Conquerors.*

Other Scriptures sound forth priviledges: *The righteous shall hold on his way; and he that hath clean hands, shall be stronger and stronger, Job 17. 9. They that are planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God, and still bring forth fruit in old age, Psal. 92. 14. They that trust in the Lord, shall be as mount Sion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever, Psal. 125. 1. The fear of the Lord is so put into their hearts, that they shall not depart from him, Jer. 32. 40. Their house is built upon a rock, so as it shall not fall, though the winds blow strong, and the waters flow amain, Mat. 7. 25. with other firm and undeniable grounds of persevering in grace, which follow afterward: all proving, that true Believers shall still renew their strength, and not faint nor be weary.*

Here it may be asked, How doth the Lord renew strength to his people? The answer is, He renews their strength in the use of holy means appointed thereunto; namely those sacred Ordinances which he hath set apart, first and last to carry on the work of grace in the hearts of his Chosen: which that they may indeed obtain, he puts them into a frame of waiting on his Majesty in his own way, wherein he will meet them, and bestow a blessing on them, as he hath promised, *2 Cor. 5. 5. Now he that hath wrought us for the self same end thing, is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.* So at the Text, it stands as a Description of the godly, They are such as wait upon the Lord; they must know they are Servants, and need dependance on the heavenly Master, and as Servants must wait till they receive mercy at his hands: and so they shall.

shall be sure to speed of their suit. *Lam. 3. 25. The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.* A Princes good Servant ever stands in the way of preferment: and so for Christianity. To speed of strength and every comfortable supply, we must be careful to be found in the way of faith and obedience.

Here note these phrases of Scripture;

1. Wait at the Posts of his doors, *Prov. 8. 34. Blessed is the man that heareth me, saith Christ the wisdom of God, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.* Thriving Christians must diligently attend when a good Sermon is to be heard, or a Sacrament to be received, or a Fast to be kept, or else a day of Thanksgiving. They must come both preparedly and forwardly: neither be absent, nor yet backward, but come upon the wing as Doves to their houses when pursued by a bird of prey, *Esa. 60. 8. swift to hear, Jam. 1. 19. Cornelius and his Company, when Peter was coming to preach, were ready beforehand to hear what he should say, Act. 10. 33. We are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God, with ver. 24. Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his Kinsmen and near friends.* And it is a great sin in many, to make the Minister and Congregation wait when they will please to appear.

2. Wait till he have mercy, *Psal. 123. 2. Behold, as the eyes of Servants look unto the hand of their Masters, and as the eyes of a Maiden to the hand of her Miltress, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, untill that he have mercy upon us.* He hath promised great things to his people: but his people must wait for performance. The Vision of comfort will speak at last, and not deceive; but in the mean time we must wait to see when God will please to answer our expectation, *Hab. 2. 3. And he that believeth must not make haste, so limiting the Holy One of Israel; much less rage or murmur, or be impotent of mind; least of all to utter that blaspheming voice, This evil is of the Lord, and shall I wait for the Lord any longer? 2 King. 6. 33. Remember, it is a mercy to speed at the last; if ever we be heard in prayer, it is enough: enough if ever an Isaac be had, or supply, or comfort, or deliverance.* This that I said,

We must wait in the way of faith: not only to the second and third watch of the night, but till morning. Davids soul waited for the Lord, more then they that wait for the morning, yea more then they that wait for the morning, Psal. 130.6.

3. *Wait upon the Office which God or man hath assigned thee unto, Rom. 12. 7. If we have received the ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching: or he that exhorteth, on exhortation. And by the like reason, a Magistrate must wait on governing, an Householder on looking to the ways of his Family, a Servant on doing his business painfully and faithfully, a Child in his place, a poor creature in humble walking: In every of which while we serve our Brethren, or dispatch our own affairs; yet, doing all as we ought, we shall serve the Lord Jesus Christ, and wait on him in the way of our obedience: especially if we make a business of our Calling, and abide upon it, and watch all opportunities for advancing the glory of God, and our own reckoning: not as those that are in and out, when they have hit into a good way, fickle, uncertain, only good by fits and starts, who are not likely to inherit the promises; the promise is to them that are constant, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord: and this is the right waiting.*

4. *Wait for the Lord in the way of his judgments, Esa. 26. 8. Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy Name, and to the remembrance of thee; namely, to make good use of afflictions, and learn righteousness by them, as ver. 9. The Inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. The Lord sometimes corrects his people, it may be with sore and grievous corrections; yet even then they must abide with him, each one according to his Calling, and study to be better for the sharp Visitation, saying, What would the Lord have me to do? or wherein may I be better, or do better then I have done? Lord, shew me for what thou contendest with me: and not only chastise me thus, but teach me out of thy law, that by all thy Discipline I may be blessed at the last, Psal. 94. 12. It concerns Gods Children to wait on their Father, not only when he causeth their way to prosper, that they even wash their footsteps in butter; but when he*
changeth

changeth his dispensations toward them, that all is in clouds and storms, and he seems an adversary to them; for, even then they may be made partakers of his holiness; and when they are proved and humbled, he means to do them good in their latter end.

5. *Wait all the days of thy appointed time, as did Job, chap. 14. 14. If a man dye, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.* It is a great change when death comes. So dye well, is the greatest work we have to do in the world, and we need to take all our time allotted for our being here, to be fitting our selves for that great change. All will prove little enough, when we are entring into that narrow Wicket, so to pass into another world.

And wait till Christ comes to judgment, as the good servant who watcheth for the return of his Lord, and will be careful to do up all his work before hand. Christ comes to judge the quick and dead, of all things done in the body, good and evil, and a strict account must be given of all: therefore still wait, and make ready thy accounts.

And wait till the Bridegroom open the door to the wise Virgins. And to be able to enter, provide Oil for thy Lamp in time, and Oil that will hold till midnight, that thou may not be put to borrow: there will be no borrowing at that time, *Mat. 25. 9.* The wise answered the foolish, *Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you, but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for your selves.* Yet such foolishness reigns in many who profess to wait for the coming of Christ. A lamp of outward profession they have, but not sufficient Oil to feed their Lamp, and so are excluded, and left in the dark. They seem good a little in the former part of their life, and then wax remiss. They begin in the spirit, and end in the flesh, either in respect of Doctrine or Practice, and so they lose all the good they have done, and are found trespassers against the truth which they have basely deserted.

Thus we see, who they are that wait on the Lord. And these are they that renew their strength as the Eagles, and persevere in the good way of God to the end; So the conclusion remains firm, The way whereby the strength of Gods Children

drawn is maintained, is their attendance on him in an holy course of faith and obedience. They must *wait* upon him by faith, expecting the performance of his promises: And they must *wait* upon him by their obedience, in the use of his Ordinances, as good servants ought to do: and so they shall *renew their strength* out of all their faintings.

Christians complain sometimes of weakness in their faith, dulness in prayer, hardness of heart, and the like corruptions. They are ready to *faint and be weary* in their holy profession. It grieves them, that they proceed no better then they do. They lack but little sometimes to cast up all and make Holy-day. Now let such acknowledge and take notice, where their great strength lieth. Faith and obedience will in time remedy all this. Let them believe *above hope*, rather then cast away their confidence, and let them still attend the good Ordinances of God, which he hath sanctified and set apart for their confirmation in grace; and in time they shall see all this evil redrest; they shall meet with a strength they know not whence, but only from God, and this shall increase grace and comfort in their souls, and fortifie them yet more to the day of their Redemption, Esa. 25. 9. *It shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad, and rejoyce in his salvation;* and chap. 26. 8. and 30. 18. and Dan. 12. 12. *Blessed is he that waiteth.*

Certainly God will not be wanting to his own wayes, nor fail of his promises made to Believers: and where is faith to call for them, they shall surely be fulfilled, Psal. 9. 18. *The needy shall not alway be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever;* and Psal. 10. 17. *Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble; thou wilt prepare their heart: thou wilt cause thine ear to hear.* It is not for his glory, to fail his people; or if he should, their hearts would fail them, they would fall quite away, their souls would be lost, and their holy profession greatly disparaged.

Here it may be objected, that many who waited upon God sometime, are grown faint and weary, and have utterly lost all their strength in the matters of Religion. *Ans.* No doubt but

but hypocrites may quite fall away, it may be turn to be enemies : they never waited on God in the way of faith and obedience ; and therefore might well let fall their hopeful beginnings, and plausible forms of religiousness, 1 John 2. 19. *They went out from us, but they were not of us ; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us : but they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us.* Such are all our Apostates, whether they be become Papists, or Hereticks, or Mockers of Zeal, or Worldlings, or Persecutors of their godly Brethren, or profane in the course of their lives.

But whether may not a true Believer lose his strength, and faint, and be weary ? *Answ.* Though it be a priviledge of the New Covenant, that the grace of Christ in his people shall not fail and be extinguished ; yet they have no such priviledge as to flourish and remain still in the same vigor. Their strength may be weakned, though not annulled. As in Nature a strong man may become weak by a Disease, or by long fasting, or by much travelling, or the like ; so in matters of grace, a tall and lusty Christian may become weak, even as another who is but a Novice and beginner in the School of Christ ; I mean for a while, and in some particular thing, not wholly, nor to the end. A Brother may be overtaken in a fault : and another may be tempted in like manner, Gal. 6. 1. And he that thinketh he standeth, must take heed lest he fall.

Now in two respects may the strength of a true Christian be much abated : both for his grace, and for his comforts.

1. His graces and gracious behaviour may be much weakned. *Ephesus* lost her first love ; that is, the measure of love to the Gospel, which she shewed at first receiving it, Rev. 2. 4. She loved it still, and loved it heartily, as appears by the second Verse, *I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear with them that are evil ; and thou hast tryed them which say they are Apostles and are not, and hast found them lyars : And hast born, and hast patience, and for my Name sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.* But she loved it not so earnestly and heartily, as she did at the beginning. She had need to quicken up her self, and do the first works. So in chap.

chap 3. 2. fainting *Sardis* must be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to dye; for, her works were not found perfect before God: they were not done in that entire manner as formerly they were: So of other graces, we feel too often, and too much, how our faith, or hope, or patience, or humility, and the rest, do meet with knocks and cracks. We make too many breaches in them. Sometimes it is too too bad. Our lives are nothing so profitable as they were. The care and watch is broken up in comparison of the former diligence. The tongue is even tyed, and good speech is very rare, over it was heretofore: that if we should be still on the losing hand, as we are now and then, we should in time prove very Bankrupts in grace, and be nothing worth toward God, and toward the salvation of our souls.

2. The comforts of a true Christian may be much weakened, that he needs to pray with *David*, *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation*, and, *Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice*, *Psal. 51. 8, 12*. And often in the *Psalms* we read an alternation of joy and sorrow; So unto this day Gods Children find great alteration in their comforts: they have not the old feelings, they miss the refreshings of the night which formerly they found; they want the joys of the Spirit in the ancient liveliness; their assurances are much decayed; the head now hangs down like a Bull-rush which even was lifted up cheerfully in looking for the day of Redemption: the voice of joy is gone from their dwellings. All is amort, and in a dump, and the man wonders what is come to him to make him so heavy. He hath worldly comforts as he had before; yea, and he performs the same duties as he did before: yet he hath not the same comfort, either by failing in those duties, or committing some presumptuous sin whereof hitherto he hath not repented, as he sees at last, and so recovers his hold of God; but for the present he is very weak, as wanting *the joy of the Lord which should be his strength*, *Neh. 8. 10*.

But some will ask, How far may the strength of a true Christian be abated? *Ans. 1.* With Caution; the question is not of the being of a Christian, but of his strength. He that is
once

once truly regenerate, is ever regenerate, and ever in the state of grace : Only his grace is not alike strong at all times. 2. Of them that faint, all have not their strength in like manner or measure taken from them, nor the same Christian every time of fainting. Some are grievous falls, some less ; some are lighter fears and sorrows, some heavy. Accordingly there needs more ado to recover some then other. On some we must have compassion, others we must save with fear, plucking them out of the fire, still *putting a difference* as the Apostle speaks, *Jude 22. 23.* 3. It is lamentable to say, how far the strength of a true Christian may be abated.

For graces, not only the exercise and manifestation of them may be suspended, but even the habits themselves much wasted, and things done which are quite contrary. *David* failed so far in Charity toward *Uriah*, that he contrived the murder of him. *Peter* failed so far in Charity toward Christ, that he denied and forswore him, and that under a Curse. So of the Drunkenness of *Noah*, the Incest of *Lot*, the rage of *Aśa* against the Prophet, and other mad moods of good men, wherein it was strange to discover so much weakness ; and it is an horrible stumbling-block to the world, that the Cedars of *Libanon* were so shaken ; which is seen now and then, even at this day.

For comforts : they may seem sometimes to be utterly banished from an holy heart, and despair set in the room ; witness the time of some spiritual desertion : Oh the Lord hath forgotten to be gracious, and shut up his loving kindness in everlasting displeasure ! *Psal. 77. 7, 8, 9.* *David* laments mournfully before he recovers the joy of his salvation. *Peter* weeps bitterly before he gets a good look from Christ again : and then he is shrewdly puzzled with those vexing questions, *Peter, lovest thou me ? Peter, lovest thou me ? Peter, lovest thou me more then these ?* Good Documents for all the Lords Darlings, to be chary of their joys, and take heed of lashing out at any time : take heed of security, take heed of wantonness, take heed of quenching or grieving the Spirit ; It may cost thee the setting on. Time may be, that neither thy self nor others can afford thee comfort, Neither Reading, nor

Praying, nor Fasting, nor all good exercises together can speak a word of peace to thy heart; that is the work of God, and he will take his own time, both to chasten thy disloyalty, and to turn thy captivity, as he did for *Job*.

Here some may be inquisitive to know, what it is that thus takes away the strength of a true Christian. Whereto I say,

1. It may be, he wants his ordinary meals; and then we know a strong man will grow weak quickly. It may be, he is removed from a powerful Ministry which sometimes he lived under: or hears not good Preaching so often as he was wont to do; while he heard duly and daily, he was kept in flesh, and good heart. Or it may be, he hath cast off his private exercises of reading the Scriptures and other good Books, which should both fasten and renew the things delivered in the publick Ministry. Or it may be, he prays not by himself so often as he used to do, but is a stranger in the Court of heaven: the Father that sees in secret, doth seldom see him in his Closet, in respect of former days. Or it may be, the exercise of fasting is now wholly neglected: he cannot intend it, or it is an harsh exercise: whereas indeed the only cause is, his heart is not so holy and sincere as it was. Or it may be, he adventures too much, to stand alone in the profession, forsakes the Assemblies of Saints, and so meets with that wo, *Wo to him that is alone.*

2. Too much eagerness upon the world slacks the love of heaven and heavenly things, as hath been said, *Amor amoris impeditur*; Carnal love either extinguisheth or lesseneth spiritual. Where earthliness is predominant, there is no love at all in sincerity: these Thorns choak the seed of the word. Or where it creeps too much upon a good heart, the love is but weak: low Thorns do some mischief to the Corn, as in *Demas* who for a while forsook the Apostle and embraced the present world, *2 Tim. 4. 10.* Many a good Christian hath found by woful experience, that having too many Irons in the fire, or taking too many cares into his head, he hath much withered of his former greenness, and liveliness in grace: the world hath proved a Step-Mother to better things, as in *Martha* who

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was encumbered with many things. So of Ambition, itching for repute and credit in the world, till a reproof comes, *Seekest thou great things for thy self? seek them not.* So complying with evil and carnal men, till the Lord say, *Shouldest thou help the ungodly?* or be friends with them that hate the Lord? This is one general cause, why they are not so zealous in age, as when they were young Converts.

3. Scandalous or presumptuous sins do waste the Christians strength apace, as in those holy men before rehearsed. All sin is of a deadning and hardning nature, and sets the Christian back a little, that he is not so zealous as he should and would be; as a Dog at his heels, keeping him from running. But while it is only of infirmity, it little hinders him in his course; God is easily intreated to assist him, and continue the guidance of his Spirit: and even by such rubs he gets ground daily. But when the conscience is deeply wounded, when the light is notoriously resisted, when the heart smites and yet he will rush on, this shall cost him dear; now grace goes away exceedingly, and comfort with the grace; now he is become weak as another man, and God hath some sharp correction in store for him, to set him in his right wits again. You know what evils followed *David* upon those scandals. God will redeem his own glory, and the honor of holy profession, with the sorrows of his evil servants.

4. Sometimes it is not for scandalous or presumptuous sins that the Lord forsakes his servants; but their unthankfulness for former graces, and comforts, and mercies received. They used them securely, and gave not him the glory, as he expected and deserved; and therefore he leaves them for a while, and it may be, whips their own consciences. They shall learn by the want, what it was to have so much grace and comfort, and may say as *Psal. 102. 23. He weakened my strength in the way: he shortened my days.* He takes a kind of revenge for the great unkindness. This is the ordinary case of many, who keep their ways and lives somewhat fair, yet heavy and heartless. Having been unthankful, they are now left to this indifferency.

5. Temptation may do much. Never were the *Philistine*

so watchful to bind *Samson*, and know where his great strength lay, that they might deprive him of it, as the Devil is busie to rob and spoil us of our spiritual strength. For this he watcheth continually, and if he can come unobserved, while we are secure and mindless of him, he preys upon us exceedingly. So he weakned our first Parents, when they were much stronger then we are; and *David*, that he numbred the people; and *Peter*, that he was almost blown away like chaff.

These are the ordinary suckers that draw out much of the Life-bloud of true Christians. It shall be our wisdom, every one to examine his own heart and estate, so to see how far he is decayed in the Trade of godliness, and find out the true and proper cause of such languishing; that so he may do afterward what is fit to be done, by repentance, prayer, and more care in the use of holy means appointed for the regaining of his strength.

Consider, it is miserable, to have ones spiritual strength so weakned; even as miserable as to become poor after great wealthiness, or sickly after great healthiness: A lamentable change, will nature and reason say: and grace will teach a godly man to say likewise of spirituals. By faith the Elders *out of weakness were made strong, and waxed valiant in fight, Heb. 11. 34.* And this man of strong is become weak, and fainteth in fighting the battels of the Lord. How is he decayed! Oh this woful bankruptnes of the soul, whither doth it tend! and what will be the end of these things, unless the wiser course be taken in time!

Christians, it concerns us much to lament and bewail this faintness, whatever it is found in any. Say not therefore, I am safe in the main, I cannot fall from grace, I may do well enough though I be weaker then I was. O who would miss so many comforts of the Spirit, as such a one must miss! or walk so heavily as such a one must walk! it may be, feel so many terrours as such a one must feel! that there is but little difference between hell and him, and he lets go that perswasion concerning perseverance, and hath some cause to doubt and fear he shall fall quite away. I say, who would be in such a woful

woful case? Therefore it is time to renew thy repentance, and thy covenant, and thy endeavours in footing it along in the ways of God; as now toward a Sacrament, the Lord offers thee new strength, and more occasions to recover what is decayed since the last Sacrament: he spreads his Table for thee again, and hath kild his fatlings: all is prepared and ready, only be not thou unprepared and unready, &c.

Know the only comfort is to them that take notice of their fainting, and bewail it, and would fain redress it. Our Text saith, *They shall renew their strength*: Though their strength do decay at times, yet it shall be renewed; the labour that they take against a Sacrament, shall not be lost: therefore go in faith, and go with confidence; this is a promise, and shall surely be performed: *Thou waitest on the Lord, therefore thou shalt renew thy strength*. Heed and believe it, and hear no accusing voices to the contrary, either of the Devil or of thine own unbelieving heart. Say not, I often grow weak after I have been strong; therefore I fear whether ever I shall come to that pitch and stature in grace, or comfort, which sometimes I had. Know it is our condition in this life, still to ebb and flow; in heaven only we renew not our strength. And divers Saints have relapsed, as we see in the Spouse, *Cant. 3. and 5.* And the promises here are indefinite: after Relapses strength shall be renewed as well as in other cases; though perhaps with more ado.

Only follow on, and pray still: one day thou shalt say as David, *Psal. 138. 3. in the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthnest me with strength in my soul*. And it is greater glory to God, to preserve so weak a Vessel as thou art to his heavenly Kingdom, having said, *My grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in weakness*, *2 Cor. 12. 9.* If we be strong in the Lord and the power of his might, we are safe, we are sure to do well enough. Troubled we may be, and shall be. The Devil, and the World, and the Flesh will provide us troubles: but in all this Conflict we shall stand, and in the end overcome, and in overcoming is the Crown and Glory. *To him that overcome, will I give such and such mercies.*

Now all this serves for Information, Consolation, and Exhortation,

U S E. I.

INformation in two things : If those things stand for truths according to the Scripture,

1. Hereby is established the Doctrine of Saints perseverance in the estate of grace, whereinto they are brought at their conversion. When they are once regenerate, and wait on the Lord as before, they are sure to continue in that holy and happy estate to the end ; yea to an endless glory. *Now and Ever*; I speak not any thing to magnifie our selves and our pure naturals, as some have prated : but only to advance the grace of God in Christ, by whom we are able to do all things. And we say, It is vain whatsoever the Adversaries object concerning a mans own weakness, that he is apt to fall into gross sins, and shake off the grace of God, and become no sheep, no Member of Christ, no Child of God, no Heir of Heaven. True, of himself he is apt to do so, and there is no other likelihood, but if a Christian were left to himself, he would fall both fearfully and finally. We have an evil heart of unbelief to depart from the living God, and are not sufficient of our selves to persevere in the good estate wherein we are set. But what saith our Doctrine ? the strength whereby a true Christian standeth, is a strength above that of Nature, even most refined. It is a borrowed strength, a strength derived from God, and will suffice him against all his weaknesses, and all oppositions from hell and the world. It will work so strongly in his heart, that he *will not* fall away, *will not* become a Goat when he was a Sheep, *will not* run out of the sheepfold, *will not* of a Child of God become a Child of the Devil, nor lose the possession of heaven which he hath had in his eye to quicken and encourage him in his way. The fear of God is so put into his heart, that he neither can nor will depart from him. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance. God will never repent, that he so revealed himself to the Elect ;

Elect ; and the Elect (by grace) shall never repent.

2. The world is hereby convinced and condemned of passing rash and erroneous judgment upon the godly, because of their falls and failings : Oh they are Hypocrites, Dissemblers, make a shew of Religion, and talk much of profession ; but see how they do the contrary ! But beware of Blasphemy : It were good to hush and be silent, and not condemn the Generation of Gods Children. Know, the Christian may be true, though weak : or he may be strong, though weak in this or that particular ; his God is able to raise him again, and *make him stand, Rom. 14. 4.* His strength shall be renewed, when another with his meer civilities and formalities shall fall, and fall without recovery. I marvel what these would have said if they had lived in the days of *David*, and seen him so scandalous in the matter of *Urah*. Were they not Gods enemies, who blasphemed because of those sins ? *2 Sam. 12. 14.* *By this deed thou hast caused the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.* It were time for all our Mockers and Censurers to repent bitterly.

U S E. II.

THis stability of a godly mans estate ministers singular comfort to all who upon good evidence have owned and applyed Gods mercy to their poor hearts. Their comfort is, that they stand not by their own strength, nor such a strength as men of the world stand by, but a surpassing and excellent strength which shall carry them bravely through the briars to a place of rest and glory.

True, ye bear about you a weak and mortal body, and beside, a sinful flesh which grieves you more then the other ; and ye fear sometimes that ye shall never hold out in the work of God to the end and blessed reward prepared for the Saints. But pluck up your hearts, and follow on carefully and conscientiously in the use of means to attain the Resurrection of the just. Herein ye labour and sweat and fear, and only faint not ; and ye find many discouragements on earth, and from hell. Well, your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord : and know, It is not your own strength that must do it, but his ; as
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the quarrel and battel is not yours, but his; thousands shall fall on your right hand, and ten thousands on the left, but you shall escape, as here it is said, *Even the youths shall faint and be weary; but they that wait on the Lord, shall renew their strength.* He that believes, hath the witness in himself; and he hath the fountain of life in himself, even the Spirit of grace as living waters, which shall refresh his soul in every year of drought. Only believe, and thou shalt surely be established. Remember, flesh indeed is an enemy, but mortified, and God hath given us the Victory through Christ our Lord. More, as grace will make it; our corruption of nature shall further the work of God in us, by making us low in our own eyes, and driving us to the means whereby we may be strengthened. It makes us earnest in prayer to get a supply from heaven which we cannot find upon earth. It preserves an Appetite to the word, which is the main Cordial to revive a Christian heart now fainting. It sends him often to the Lords Table, where he may have a good Meats meat for the strengthening of his faith, and comforting of his soul. As likewise to the Society of the godly: to reading and other props which God in love hath provided to uphold him.

Object. There is a power from hell which opposeth this power of grace; and may not this one time or other throw the Christian quite upon his back? can Principalities and Powers do nothing, think you?

Answer. Nothing, so as to foil or vanquish this strong grace of God in the Saints. It is a mighty power indeed, but created, and infinitely inferiour to that Divine Power whereby a true Christian subsisteth. The Devil is a chained enemy, infatuated, vanquished; and while Gods people are willing to resist, he will surely uphold them in the fight unto Victory: the God of peace will tread Satan under their feet shortly; and they may be persuaded as *Paul*, that neither Principalities nor Powers, nor any other creatures shall be ever able to separate them from the love of God in Jesus Christ, *Rom. 8 38, 39.*

More comfort yet, in Christ that loved them they shall be more then Conquerors; the strength which was at any time abated, shall be renewed again, and God will perfect the work

work which he once began, *Psal.* 138.7,8. See some particulars.

1. The Christian is sometimes strong in faith, and gives much glory to God, and gains much chearfulness to himself, even the full assurance of faith: By which he rests in the love of God with an holy security, much joy, many triumphs over hell and Satan; these enemies are despised as feeble *Philistines*, not able to hurt him. He got so much ground by the last Sacrament, and by his course of prayer, reading, and godly exercises, that he cared not if he dyed presently, in respect of himself and the safety of his own soul. But after awhile comes a cloud over his spirit, and he is fain to let go much of his confidence. Yet he gets up again in little time; his strength is renewed, and he grows as confident as before: witness those Vicissitudes of joy and sorrow in *David*, *Psal.* 30. the whole.

2. Patience is a strong grace, such as whereby a Christian can *possesse his soul* in hard times, and distractul occasions, *Luke* 21.19. Sometimes he is not troubled though he be mightily provoked: great occasion disquiets him not, nor removes him from his principles; whereof *Job* is a notable example. Yet afterward (as in him) great breaches are made, and the soul even lost by impatience. Yet, as in him, the end is with submission and quietness; *Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and what end the Lord gave.*

3. The prayer of faith is omnipotent, as *Luther* called it; a godly man sometimes wrestles hard and prevailes much with God, and gets much comfort at the Throne of grace; a large and almost sensible answer to his prayers, a firm assurance of the love of God, and a part in Christ. Take him at such a time, he is the most resolute man living, ready to do or suffer any thing, prepared for any condition. Yet sometimes his hands hang down as much as *Moses*, and with many intercourses of valour and weakness he gets the victory over all the *Amalekites* in hell.

4. In respect of the spiritual warfare; a Christian is strong in the Lord and the power of his might: having put on the whole Armor of God, sometimes he weilds it stoutly and wisely, and acquits himself bravely for the honour of his

Captain, and his own discharge, safety, glory; prosperity in^dveigles him not, adversity affrights him not: neither friends allure him from God and duty, nor enemies terrifie him: his watchfulness and jealousie over his heart makes him invincible; you would think ye saw some *Alexander* conquering the world, or some *Joshua* driving down Kingdoms and Cities before him. Yet sometimes Satan gets an advantage against him, as over the Incestuous person and the other *Corinthians*, 2 *Cor.* 2. 11. The man either lay snorting in his great sin, or was ready to be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow: and they either neglected holy Discipline altogether, or else held him too long under that terrible censure of Excommunication: Yet both he and they came into right order again, chap. 7. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. And so other of the Lords Warriors; they forsake the field sometimes, but soon get courage, and soon return to the field afresh.

5. In respect of active obedience; sometimes the life is very press and strict and unblameable, and profitable, the ways very fair, a very good mixture of zeal and discretion; good Husbandry and heavenly-mindedness are well matcht together, that the man is even a Mirror in his place; many may take example by him, many bless God for him, and few can do better then he doth: And if he could keep at this stay, he should live like an Angel upon earth. But after a while the doating fit comes, and all is off the hooks: he is either scandalous with *David*, or secure with the Spouse in the *Canticles*. A great flaw and gap is made till all be ashamed of him, and he weary of himself. A woful pickle, and damnable, but that he recovers all; as *Peter*, for a while a Turn-Coat, but by and by a Penitent, and at last a Martyr.

6. *The joy of the Lord is our strength*, *Neb.* 8. 10. Sometimes we take much comfort in God, go about his work very chearfully, and pass not for small rubs that lie in our way, no nor great ones: it sufficeth that God is gracious, and we shall have joy and glory enough in heaven. But this bright-shining day suffers obscurity by a cloud, when the Lord withdraweth a little. Yet toward Evening it waxeth as bright as ever it was, as the Martyrs at the stake after Recantation.

In every thing, with a true Christian there is a recovery of losses to be made; it is like the dead root of Jesse, yet budding: or as a Wheat-Corn, dead in Winter, but putting forth much strength in the Summer against the Harveſt. And this power of renewing his strength comes chiefly from God, who ſaith ſuch ſhall *renew their ſtrength*; and ſecondarily from themſelves, who being acted by grace will be willing all along to help themſelves: and ſo the Lord gets the honor of renewing their ſtrength, and themſelves get much comfort by it.

Do ye yet want any more comfort? Then ſee a little, how this waiting on God and renewing of ſtrength may ſtand you in ſtead againſt all thoſe fears, and cares, and troubles, which at times ye are ſubject unto. No Prince when a Battel hath gone againſt him, is ſo ſure to recruit his forces, and joyn iſſue again with the enemy, as the Believer is ſure by waiting on his God to renew his ſtrength, and recover all he hath loſt: and if he fear, it is more then his good eſtate alloweth: as for inſtance.

1. Some good ſouls are afraid they ſhall never hold on to the end: they have gone a good way in Religion, but are ſo wearyiſh in themſelves, and find the world run ſo ſtrong againſt them, that they doubt they ſhall not overcome, and then they muſt loſe their Crown. To whom I reply, This and other places aſſure us of ſufficient grounds for perfeverance in the ſtate of grace; We ſtand by the everlaſting love and compaſſion and covenant of our God. We ſtand by the grace of a Mediator, and ſo are better able to hold on then was *Adam* in innocency. We ſtand by the ſtrength and conduct of the Almighty Spirit of God, who will never forſake us, but abide with us for ever. We ſtand by the invincible power of faith, which through the mercy of God is able to keep us unto ſalvation. We ſtand by vertue of the word, that Immortal and Incorruptible ſeed which endureth for ever. And the ſeed of God ſo abideth in us, that we ſhall not fall away, neither totally nor finally. If ſo, what ground for theſe fears or faintings?

2. Some old Diſciples are much troubled with the infirmities

ries of old age, in mind, or body, or both ; and are even weary of themselves, and perform Religious duties but wearisomely : they are willing still to wait upon their God , but cannot tell whether they shall be accepted or no, or enabled to go on to Victory. *Answ.* Yet shall such be *holpen with a little help*, *Dan. 11 34.* Little in their sense and apprehension, but not in it self ; it is the power of God, whereby they are kept to salvation ; and we know, that the weakness of God is stronger then men. We know also, that God hath enlarged his power and all his excellencies for the good of his Chosen, *Esa. 46. 3, 4.* *Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are born by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb ; And even to your old age I am he, and even to hoar haires I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear, and I will carry, and will deliver you.* Good comfort to them whose understanding and memory fails them, with legs and senses, and all that is of nature, and weather offends them whether hot or cold, and much ado they have to hold out with cheariness a little longer. Yet in their God they shall find a supply both of strength and comfort, to carry them to their journies end ; Only let them pray, and it shall be done for them. Plead as *David*, *Psal. 71 9, 12, 17, 18.* *Cast me not off in the time of old age : forsake me not when my strength faileth. O God, be not far from me. I will go in the strength of the Lord God. O God, thou hast taught me from my youth, and hitherto I have declared thy wondrous work. Now also when I am old and gray-beaded, O Lord forsake me not, untill I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.* Where note by the way, what is the proper and chief end of desiring long life, or the assistance of God in our way : It is that we may the better advance the glory of God, and serve our generation according to his counsel.

3. Another is even tyred out with Satanical temptations and accusations, and doubts that one time or other he shall fall by the hand of this hellish enemy. Oh how black, and cunning, and incessant his fiery darts are ! and himself in the mean time very weak and simple, and easie to be over-reached. Can there be any hope of carrying the Victory ? *Answ.*

Yes,

Yes, because thy Captain hath said, *Resist the Devil, and he shall fly from you*: and, *ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one*: and, *the God of peace shall tread Satan under your feet shortly*; and, the head of the old Serpent is so bruised by the seed of the Woman and his Victory, that he can never recover full strength against the remnant of her seed. We know too, that greater is he that is in us, then he that is in the world. We read of the weapons which we are to wield and overcome, that they are of Gods framing and appointment; the *Armour of God*; and, The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to cast down strong holds which are raised against God, and against our comfort; and, Not only the weapons are mighty, but we by them; *Strong in the Lord and the power of his might*: so that a song of triumph may be sung by fainty Believers, *Who shall accuse, or condemn, or separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ*? Certainly all the gates of hell shall never prevail against the Church of God, nor any faithful Member of it.

4. Other Believers fear because of many troubles of the family, or of the world; there are fightings without, and terrors within: they even faint and are weary, and shall be tyred out one time or other: what shall they do? *Answ.* Let them remember, that Christ hath overcome the world, and therefore though in the world they have tribulation, yet in him they shall have peace, and ought to be of good cheer: and, *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of all*. And if deliverance be delayed, yet by the assistance of Christ and his Spirit the afflictions are sweetned, and the heart supported, and all the suffering sanctified, that in time the Christian shall say, *It was good for me to be afflicted, that I might learn by statutes*. And remember, that when the troubles last longest, yet all the while the Christian Traveler is getting nearer and nearer to his Fathers house: so that, *Yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and his reward is with him*; In the Mount it will be seen.

5. Other Believers who complain not of troubles in things of nature or the world, yet trouble themselves much about the welfare of the Church, which they see endangered by enemies;

enemies; some undermining, others infected with errors and heresies, and scattering their poison far and near: Oh what will become of poor *Sion*, which is so hated or defaced! many enemies, and but few real friends! *Ans^w*. Bear up cheerfully: it is a good sign in thee, that thou art so tender of the Churches well-doing; thou hast a promise, *They shall prosper that love Sion: and all they that mourn for her, shall be glad and rejoice with her, Esa. 66. 10.* And as for the Church it self, remember, though lovest it well, yet God loves it better, and knows better how to provide for its safety and chiefest welfare, *Psal. 87. 2. The Lord loveth the gates of Sion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.* As for the enemies, secret or open, let the King of *Sion* alone to deal with them, for their conversion or confusion, or to raise up friends as need shall require, and he sees expedient, that the Captivity may be turned, and great gifts bestowed for the beautifying of *Sion*.

6. Others know not what they shall do, if persecution should arise for the Gospels sake: they are fainty enough under the persecution of the tongue, or in smaller tryals; and they doubt they shall fall utterly if fire and faggot should come in use again. But remember here, who brought the Martyrs through the flames to give testimony to the truths of the Gospel. They were flesh and bloud as we are, and yet were strengthened to pass through the fire after Jesus Christ: and they had relations and advantages to leave for the truth, as near and dear as we have, and yet by grace were enabled to part with all; yea rejoiced, that they were accounted worthy to suffer for the Name of Christ. And ye may observe in reading the Histories of the Martyrs, how they that were very timorous for a while, yet coming in sight of the stake they have waxed joyful and confident, as Mr. Glover to his friend who knew his fears, *O Austine, He is come, he is come*, meaning the Spirit of strength and comfort. Remember too, that the Lord hath continued his Church, and brought it through persecuting times, as well as times of prosperity; yea, the Primitive Church was planted and watered, and thrived best in the persecution of the first three hundred years. The bloud of the Martyrs proved the seed of the Church, to propagate
and

and make glorious the Kingdom of Christ. Therefore faint not, nor be weary for any persecution, felt or feared.

7. A Believer may say, *Death is the King of terrors*; and I fear I shall not dye with any patience or comfort: I know not what kind of death I shall dye, or where, or with what Company: it may be, by the Pestilence, or by the Sword, or by some tormenting Disease, or a lingring Disease, I know not what, but I doubt I shall faint at the last; and then where is all my hope and reward? *Ans.* Remember what hath been said, *This God is our God for ever and ever, he will be our guide even unto death*, *Psal. 48. 14.* And not only unto death, but in dying Jesus Christ will be gain unto us, *Phil. 1. 21.* And not only Angels are *ours*, with other good creatures, but even death is a Friend, though he come in a Mourning Gown, *1 Cor. 3. 22.* And ye know how death is out-braved from doing us a mischief, *chap. 15. 55.* *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; But thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.* As for the sad Harbingers and Messengers of death, the Lord is able, and hath promised to give a proportion of strength and comfort; that when we faint, and the outward man decays, yet the inward man shall be renewed day by day; and by rich mercy ye may come to fear nothing, even when ye walk in the midst of the valley of the shadow of death. And for the kind of Death, Company, Place, Time and all circumstances, it is best for the Child of God to submit to the will of his heavenly Father, who hath said, and would have us to rest in what he hath said, *My grace is sufficient for thee.* Only continue in a waiting condition as *Job*, all the days of thy appointed time till that great change shall come: thou shalt find it worth while, to have so waited.

But because this waiting may be long, and there go many things to waiting, as the good servant who made all ready against the coming of his Lord; I shall produce certain Motives as so many encouragements to the faithful servants of God, who do so chearfully and constantly attend their God in those duties, and those his Ordinances.

Many

Many are the benefits of a due waiting.

1. This at the Text, they shall be enabled and blessed by this their waiting, *To renew their strength, and hold out in the good ways of God unto glory.* Though there be divers weaknesses in themselves, and discouragements in the world, yet through rich mercy they shall *run and not be weary, walk and not faint*: A singular priviledge, above all Apostates who have fallen away and come to nothing.

2. They have hereby a note of true grace upon them; that they are the Children and Servants of God in sincerity, and not only in a general and common profession. Our Text useth this *Periphrasis* or Description of the godly, They that wait upon the Lord, shall do thus and thus. And it is a Description of the Gentiles conversion, *Esa. 42. 4. The Isles shall wait for his law*: with chap. 51. 5. *They shall wait upon me, and on thy Name shall they trust*: and 60. 9. *Surely the Isles shall wait for me.* It is an ordinary Inquiry among tender spirits, Whether am I indeed converted and brought home unto God or no? The solution may hence be taken, If ye wait on the Lord in the way and manner before described, ye are indeed converted, and need not trouble your selves any more.

3. Another benefit is, that these Waiters shall not in any thing be utterly disappointed, so as to be ashamed, or confounded; but one way or other shall receive satisfaction at the hands of God according to their expectation: Either he will give them the thing desired, or what shall be better, either here or hereafter, *Esa. 49. 23. They shall not be ashamed that wait for me.* They that wait upon great men in the world, do find infinite disappointments, shame, sorrow, and sometimes heart-breaking: but so shall not they that wait on the Lord.

4. Such shall have their Prayers heard, and their Petitions granted, *Psal. 40. 1. I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.* This waiting makes that a Christian passeth over a delay, and construeth it not for a denial; and holds up his head to the time wherein God will be seen for him. The like of the prayers that other Believers make in our behalf: *wait, and we shall reap the benefit of them, Psal. 25. 3. Let none that wait on thee, be ashamed.* A very com-

comfortable matter in this life of necessities urging us on every side.

5. These Waiters have many secrets revealed to them, and many experiments of the love of God, which others shall not have: they are still in the way of preferment, and shall certainly have it one time or other, *Zech. 11. 11. The poor of the flock that waited upon me, knew that it was the word of the Lord. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him. He will manifest himself to the faithful observers of his will, and not to others.* It is an excellent posture, *to abide with Christ in temptation. To be faithful to the death,* is the ready way to the Crown of Life.

6. It will be great joy on the Death-bed, so to have waited on the Lord; as dying *Jacob* found, who amidst the blessing of his Children brake out into this Extasie, *I have waited for thy salvation O Lord, Gen. 49. 18.* And when *Hezekiah* had received the sentence of death, he could say in faith, *Remember how I have walked before thee in uprightness of my heart.* And so may other Believers say in all oppositions of the wicked, *Psal. 25. 21. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait on thee.*

7. Unspeakable happiness is prepared for these our Waiters, *Esa. 64. 4. From the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen O God; beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.* Now at last it appears how blessed they are, and what it is to have the Lord waiting to do them good. Now they have the reward of all their patience and constancy. Now they see they took the wiser and safer course. Evil men had the start of them in the world, and triumphed over them: even those that wait not for the counsel of God, *Psal. 106. 13. nor the promises of God, 2 King. 6. 33. Should I wait for the Lord any longer?*

They despised the godly for being so strict, and mopish, and observant, waiting upon God at an inch. They cast out their name as evil, and watched to do them a mischief; themselves being in the mean time, the only men of note. But now when the parting place comes, and the day of distribution of rewards appeareth; now it appears how good it was to wait upon the Lord at every turn, and with constancy. The conscionable hearing, and repeating, and obeying of good

Sermons, the reverent frequenting of the Lords Table, the joyful and careful spending of Sabbaths, the diligent maintaining and holding up of holy Discipline in the Family, all the good words that have been spoken, all the good actions that have been done, shall now be rewarded liberally and plentifully. And now they shall wait upon the Lord in another manner then ever in this life, only to behol'd and partake of his glory, for their full happiness and contentment.

U S E. III.

After all those comforts that accrew by waiting on God, and so renewing our strength for hastning toward heaven, it behoves us to think on some duties to be performed; that so we may be answerable to the great loving kindnesse of our God, who first promised, and now hath performed this mercy and truth.

1. The godly should take notice of this mighty strength whereby they stand, and acknowledge it, so to become truly and unfainedly thankful: not droop in themselves, but be hearty and cheary; nor disgrace their holy profession to others, as if it were a profession all made of dumps and melancholy, nor (which is the special thing) to defraud, and deprive God of his due honour. It becomes the just to be thankful. Praise is comely for the upright. Therefore go to thy house, and tell what great things the Lord hath done for thee: confess that mighty power whereby thou standest; let it appear, both in the chearfulness and uprightness of thy life. It is a singular malice of the Devil, and also weakness in corrupt nature, not to acknowledge the work of God in the soul, doing more mischief then we are aware. Therefore herein watch, both thine own weakness and the Devils wickedness. As it is dangerous to presume of a strong faith and grace, where none is; so it is a sullen and unthankful sheepishness not to take notice of it where it is. God loseth his glory, and the Christian his portion and comfort.

And it is expedient for us to know where our strength lieth, that so we may walk in it for the end it was given us; as

is said of the Primitive Churches, *That walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, they were multiplied, Act 9.*

And, Never shall the Christian demean himself more bravely and generously, then when he considers and remembers he hath received a power whereby he can over match all the adversary powers, both of hell and earth: They are all very weaklings in comparison of him, and he can safely bid defiance to them all; *Who shall accuse, or condemn, or separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ?* yet still he will be humble and modest, because he knows it is a borrowed strength. *We are strong in the Lord, and the power of his might.*

2. This may be an encouragement to the godly, to go on with their pains and diligence in holy exercises, forasmuch as they know they shall get strength by them, and such strength as infinitely surmounts all strength of nature, both Humane and Angelical. They seem weak Ordinances, and not able to produce any worthy effects, *viz.* Reading Hearing, Praying, Fasting, Talking together. Worldly-wise men deride such courses, and many think there is no good to be got by them: else why do they neglect them as they do? But indeed they are mighty through God to the casting down of high holds, and the setting up of high fortresses of grace and comfort in stead thereof. There shall be Bread to the Sower, and good success to him that laboureth. Other labour is not so sure to speed and take effect, even when they have run to the *Indies*, and round about the world. Therefore labour on as thou hast begun, and digest all the pains that are to be taken in fortifying for heaven: as for example,

Follow on still to enjoy the Preaching of the Word, though Painful, Hateful, Chargeable. It is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth. It is the savour of life unto life, and useful divers ways, *2 Tim. 3. 16.* Then go to the Prophets, though an Husband say there is no cause, or a Wife, or a Father, or Mother, or Friend, or Master.

Fast still in a Religious manner: be not wearied with the uncouthness of the exercise; it is powerful to do marvels: sturdy Devils have been cast out by Fasting and

Prayer, and so may stout corruptions which seem untameable.

So for the Sacrament: it is an effectual Ordinance of God, to Seal up his love to the soul more thoroughly, to strengthen faith, to quicken an holy heart, to enable us unto holy duties, and holy conversation, as it were with a new addition of strength. It is another Seal of the Righteousness of faith. We may be well assured and cheered by it. Therefore take pains more then ordinary, be not so formal and slight in preparation, examine thy estate more fully and particularly, lament thy imperfections more deeply, discern the Lords body more carefully and reverently, provide better then ever heretofore, to be a welcome Guest at the Lords Table.

It is true: to do this as it ought to be done, will require sometime, and some retiredness, and some thought-taking, with sorrows and fears, and it may be, some anguish of mind. But be contented for all that; the Harvest will pay for all the labour of the Seed-time; thou shalt see in little time, how good it was for thee to be so reverent and devoutly affected; when Gods face shall shine upon thee more then before, and thy Conscience more cheered and cleared, and thy weaknesses helped, and thy life in all points rectified, thou shalt bless the time that ever thou settest to do the work of the Lord so exactly and substantially.

3. There be three duties that lie couched in the Similitude here used, whereby the perpetuity of the Saints in grace is described: *They shall mount up with wings as Eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.*

It is reported of the Eagle, that she is very long-lived: *αἰὶνός* *quasi αἰὶνός*, as if the Eagle had always a year to live; being old, she becomes young again, and not once, but often: and when she dyes, it is rather that she cannot eat for the length and crookedness of her Beak, then for want of vigor and liveliness. This her Beak a long time she casteth (say *Pliny* and *Aristotle*) as other creatures do their horns, and then she can feed afresh, and be as lively as ever. So it is a fit Similitude to express the vivacity of Believers whose life Christ is; they shall renew their strength by waiting on the Lord as before, *Pf. 103.8. Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed as the Eagles.*

But

But to follow that Similitude which is more expresse in the Text, *Of mounting up with wings as Eagles* : It is but a fable of *Zandias* the Jew, that every tenth year the Eagle flies to the sphear of the Sun, and there burns off her feathers with the heat of the Sun-beams, and so grows young again for an hundred years. This is confest on all hands, that the Eagle flies higher then any other Bird : and thence the Proverb is risen, *Aquila in nubibus*, spoken of one that soars aloft in remote and abstruse matters, which the common sort of men can never reach into. And here applied to Believers, may note their heavenly-mindedness : they set their affections on things above, and not on things which are upon earth. It notes also their agility and chearfulness in fulfilling their course : though sin as a weight press them down, yet they force up their hearts again, and still affect the way to heaven as the only way they can take for happiness.

Then for the other words, *They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint* : As in the word of *running* (saith *Musculus*) is noted fervor and alacrity of spirit, so in the word of *walking* the Prophet sets forth the continuance of proceeding ; So that in this Similitude we have three things which agree to the godly, partly as duties, partly as priviledges ; Heavenly-mindedness, Chearfulness, and Constancy in their holy course. We will speak of them severally, that the Uses may be more plain and distinct.

Doctr. 1. It is the nature of true Believers to lift up their hearts toward spiritual and heavenly things, and so they must remember to do as of duty, *Col 3.1,2. If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God ; set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth.* And the Psalmist calls them a brood of Travellers, in seeking the face of God, *Psal. 24.6.*

For why ? they are born of an heavenly Principle, which is the Spirit of God : and their treasure (as they profess) is in heaven ; therefore there also must their hearts be. And in the world they find a great deal of sin, opposition to good, distraction and hindrance from better things, vanity and vexation of spirit ; no contentment in any thing, no certainty ; therefore

fore why should they stay below? why should they not mount upward, where they are sure to be safe, and satisfied, and that for ever and ever? the Bird is safest when she keeps highest: on earth there are snares, and enemies everywhere, and that continually.

Use. To reprove earthly-minded people, who are altogether set upon things below; Profits, Lands, Houses, Honors, Easie living, Voluptuousness; so that they would care for no other heaven, if they might always live where they do. They plainly shew themselves to be but Crows and Buzzards, who never get higher then the lowest Region: therefore one day they are likely to come to a fearful end, *Phil. 3. 19. They mind earthly things, and their end is destruction.*

It must also check and condemn the earthly-mindedness of the godly themselves, who *mount* not up as they ought to do, but too much rest in these vanities below; as if of *Eagles* they would turn some vile and base Birds, whom any Carrion will content well enough.

It is too lamentable to see, how some good men are riveted into the earth and inordinately seek after profit, till grace wither, and they begin to fall into a Consumption in respect of their souls. The time, and thoughts, and cares, and affections, which should be bent and spent upon heaven and the things thereof, are now turned for earth and earthly advantages. The heart is straightened and almost shut up for any charges toward good uses. All is for the Wife and Children, and their own contentment according to the perverse humor which is grown in the soul.

Others are for their Honors and Preferments, as if they would have a *Jeremy* come and reprove them in those words to *Baruch*, *Seekest thou great things to thy self?*

Others too much hang upon evil and ungodly men, or too much seek to keep in with the wicked multitude; as if they meant no longer to be the Servants of Christ, *Gal. 1. 10. If I go about to please men, I am not the Servant of Christ.*

Others are held from good duties through fear of men, and kept in a luke-warm indifferency, as if with *Laodicea* they thought good to be spewed out of the mouth of Christ.

For

For disguised fashions, there is no talk now, but they must be tolerated, and may be used: the Preachers were as good hold their peace, as seek to take off these superfluities from their heads and shoulders: they shall but get ill-will, for speaking against these fashions. And so of Marriages: Sons of God now-a-days marry the Daughters of men, and contrary-wise, and there is no remorse for it, no sin in it; all is well, if there be State and Portion enough, with other the like vanities.

In many things we see great embasement come upon the professed servants of God, and such as we hope do serve him in truth: To whom I may say as Christ said to his Disciples, admiring the fine stones and buildings of the Temple, *Are these the things that ye look upon?* are these the contentful Objects of renewed souls? what, is your understanding enlightened, and your judgment rectified, and yet so dote upon such trifles as these are? Why, what need *wings* to mount up after these things? these are the common prey of every unclean and base-conditioned Bird that never flies aloft: these are for *Owls*, and not for *Eagles*; you shall leave these for *men of this world, who have their portion in this life*, Psal. 17. 14.

Where the Carcase is, thither will the Eagles be gathered together, saith our Saviour. He spake it of himself, and of his coming to judgment: Wherever he would appear to judge the world, thither the godly would resort, and come unto him. Consider, and gather up thy affections for heaven, and make them as many, as frequent, as earnest as ever they were. Christ is that sacred Carcase, whereon thy soul must feed unto eternal life: and if thou be an *Eagle* indeed, thou wilt scent him strongly afar off, and long for him, and hasten after him as fast as thou canst. Well, do; so here is now a Sacrament at hand and thereby an occasion to renew thy love of Christ, and of the things that pertain to his Kingdom. Now stir up thy self to thy ancient affections and actions, renew thy Covenant with God, soar aloft as thou wast wont to do; let us see thee after this Sacrament more heavenly-minded then thou hast been of late days; let thy speeches and courses speak louder that thou art for heaven in good sadness as we say;
say

say more, do more, give more, spend more, which may help thee in that journey.

The Jews upon their eating the Passover must presently walk out of *Egypt*, and thereunto in eating must have a staff in their hand. Let the Moral be thus : this heavenly Banquet requires an heavenly Appetite, affection, conversation afterward : Get out of the *Egypt* of this world as fast as thou canst. He is an holy and happy Christian, who takes every occasion to unfasten his heart from the world; earthly in it self, even after grace received, and must be skrewed up by little and little, upon every advantage that it may take. So, as he hath less earthly joy, he shall have more of the heavenly. The sweet peace with God and his own Conscience will infinitely countervail the want of all other peace and comfort whatsoever. And thrice happy are those souls, who by a right estimation of the worth of heavenly things, and by a godly jealousy over their own hearts do keep their thoughts and affections above, still looking downward with an holy disdain and weariness. It is an high pitch of great grace, for the heart to say, and the life make it good, *Vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.*

Doctr. 2. It is the nature and duty of Christians truly fearing God, to be chearful and lively in their holy course : as the *Eagles* are nimble and full of spirits to mount upward, so are and must Believers be ; the Lord loves a chearful giver, and that is reason enough, *2 Cor. 9. 7. They must run and walk : run, and not be weary ; walk, and not faint.*

Use. If they be not thus chearful, it is a fault, and must be amended. It is because they wait not on the Lord so duly and carefully as they ought to do. The promise is not performed, because the condition is not observed. Many Christians may wonder at themselves, what is come to them, that they are so heavy, so unweildy, so timorous, so backward in the way of godliness. Their spirits are even gone : they have not the heavenly Meditations that sometime they had : they delight not in the presence of God, to come before him in prayer, as sometime they did : Accordingly they have but cold comfort, and poor answer returned after their prayer. They make not
good

good motions, nor put in a good word, as heretofore. Carnal fear and modesty have seised upon them. Some one way, and some another, are mightily come behind themselves, and that measure of liveliness which sometime was in them. Hereupon they are troubled about their Estate, or have just cause to be troubled.

Well, let this be a watch-word to them, to become as chearful as ever. Say O Christian, in every such case, as the Psalmist, *Why art thou so cast down, O my soul? and why art thou so disquieted within me?* what is the matter, that I am so unto-ward? Stir up the gift that is in thee: arise and shake thy self as Samson when he was bound with chains or cords; repent and do the first works: repent and entertain the first Love again: *Return O Shulamite, return, return.* Thou hast the Spirit of God in thee, quench him not, set him on work as lively as ever: Pray, and it shall be done. Or, if that will not serve the turn, fast away this dull and melancholy Devil which possesseth thee, as is said, This kind goeth not out but by fasting and prayer. Renew thy Covenant and Vows, do something more then ordinary; that is the way to be as lively as ever thou wast.

Consider the occasion which the Lord now offers unto thee. Upon a good Banquet we use to be more lively then we were, and to gather up our spirits which were almost spent and wasted. No such Banquet as the Lord makes for his servants, the flesh of his Son which is meat indeed, and the blood of his Son which is drink indeed. These are the *fat things*, the Wine and Milk of the Gospel, *Esa. 55. 1, 2.* How can a Christian go rightly to this Banquet, and not be the better for it? How is it possible? Well, remember what that is, *to go rightly*, and do it indeed: it is often shewed in our ministry, and you called upon; none can say he knows not. Then settle to do it. He that loves grace indeed, and the comforts of grace, let him strive to be lively, and get as much of it as he can.

Doctr. 3. It is the nature and duty of good Christians to be constant in their good courses to the end: not to be weary when they run, nor faint when they walk. The duty is in *Rev. 2. 10.* *Be thou faithful unto the death.* The priviledge is in this place.

place. They are born of incorruptible seed, led by an holy Spirit that abides with them for ever, embraced with an everlasting love and Covenant, strengthened by a mighty faith which overcomes the world, and quencheth the fiery darts of the Devil. And this of the Text stands by way of promise, *They shall mount up, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.* Now all the promises of God in Christ are *Yea and Amen.* The Oath and Promise of God are *two immutable things*, wherein it is impossible he should be deceived, or deceive.

Object. They are weary oftentimes, and faint in their course: afflictions dishearten and unsettle them, corruption of nature even foils them; Satan gets within them. *Ans.* At the worst they fall not either totally or finally: nor are ever so weary or faint, but their strength is renewed again; and they may say as the Apostle, 2 Cor. 4. 8, 9, 16. *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed. We faint not, but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.*

Use. Let all that wait on the Lord with their hearts, both rejoyce in their priviledge, and look well to their duty.

1. Rejoyce in your priviledge. Your endeavours in holy ways shall be Crowned with perieverance, and your perseve-
rance with glory. Your desires shall be answered and satisfied to the full. When many fall, you shall stand. And in the day when you are shrewdly shaken, yet still you shall stand; or if you fall, you shall surely rise again. True, you must fear in respect of your selves and your own unstedfastness: but in respect of God you have no cause at all to fear or be dismayed. Through the mercy and grace of your God who hath promised, you are as sure one day to be in heaven, as now you are upon earth.

2. Look to your duty, that is, to keep your selves in the love of God, as the Apostle Jude adviseth. *Be not high-minded, but fear:* and, *Let him that standeth, take heed lest he fall.* Holy joy never breeds security, nor a neglect of the means, as carnal and presumptuous useth to do.

And

And, not only work out your salvation with fear and trembling, to shun a total and final Apostasie, but take heed of partial and temporary backslidings: admit as few interruptions in the way of well-doing, as possibly you can: still shake up your selves out of every weariness, and every fainting. Beware of the preparative, though not to everlasting destruction, yet temporary chastisement, especially in the soul, by the absence of Christ, who withdraws a while when security prevails, *Can. 3. and 5.* Ever fear to come any whit near that fatal conclusion of hypocrites, who one time or other fall away, and shew they were never the men and women that they would be taken to be; not of us, though among us, *1 John 2. 19.* And of such the Lord saith, *If any man draw back, my soul hath no pleasure in him: and they draw back to perdition, Heb. 10. 39.*

U S E. IV.

Conclusion.

ALL this so being, may encourage all to a godly life, and to receive the grace of God when it is offered to them, as that which will set them in such a blessed and permanent condition, above all the excellency nature is any way able to reach or attain. Alas man, what art thou by nature? in the greatest of thy strength thou art but a fainting, dying man: In thy youth, the flower of thine age, thou mayest be soon cropt and defaced, and then without grace in thy heart thou goest to hell as surely as *Belzebub*. What is the strength of legs, or beauty, or nimbleness, or healthiness, or any natural endowments? pretty things in their kind, and such as whereof a good use may be made: but in respect of Gods favor and heaven, very trifles. If so, then much more honor, riches, pleasures, ease, dainty diet, and the like: these some call the gifts of fortune, and Scripture saith, they take them wings, *and profit not them that have been exercised in them, Heb. 13. 9.* Wisdom would, that a man look beyond all these to the better and enduring substance. It is good that the heart be *established with grace, and not with meats.* He that is born anew unto God,

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shall

shall also be strong in God. Though his beginning be but small and weak, yet his latter end shall increase exceedingly. Others of strong shall become weak, he of weak shall become strong. Let us hear the end of all : *All flesh is grass, and the glory of man as the flower of the field : the grass withereth, and the flower fadeth away ; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever, and this is the word which by the Gospel we preach unto you, 1 Pet. 1. 24, 25.*

FINIS.
